

VILLA VIEWS

The Newsletter of St. Joseph's Villa

FALL 2020

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY

Dooley School graduate Jacob forges partnership to help Villa families facing food insecurity

"It's a different day today than it was a year ago," said Kim Hill, CEO of Chesterfield Food Bank. The food bank has expanded to feed 30,000 families a month during the COVID-19 pandemic – three times as many as last year. It's also a different day for Jacob, a graduate of our Dooley School who is now employed at the Food Bank after several years of volunteer service.

Villa families are now among those being served by Chesterfield Food Bank, thanks to Jacob's initiative to form a partnership.

"I came to the Villa after graduating just to visit, and I saw the food pantry

was running low on groceries," said Jacob. "I talked to Ms. Kim to see how we could help. The Villa was there for me and had my back when I needed it, so I wanted to pass it on."

Jacob said his experience at Dooley School and support from the Villa's Career and Transition Services (CATS) helped him become more independent, stay consistent in his behaviors, and build work ethic.

"I didn't know where I would be in the next year or so when I first came to the Villa. I thought I might go back to an institutional facility, or be locked up again. Now I'm a stronger person."

CATS assisted Jacob throughout his application and interview process. Today, he is building job skills working in the Food Bank warehouse while making a difference in his community. He stocks shelves, handles shipping and receiving, makes sure vehicles are cleaned between trips, and is continuing to take on new roles. Recently he became certified to operate a forklift.

"When Jacob first came to the Food Bank, I could really tell he had a lot of aspirations, and a lot of things he wanted to do," said Kim. "I think we are an extension of his growth that the Villa already started. Day by day he is changing and making good life decisions."

CATS makes contact-free food deliveries to nearly 50 Villa families throughout Central Virginia each week. Partners like Chesterfield Food Bank have been essential to keeping our Villa Grocery stocked for families facing food insecurity in these uncertain times, and in Jacob's case, providing a supportive environment where our students' abilities can truly shine.

*Villa staff have traveled more than **22,000 miles** to deliver groceries to families in need since March. That's equal to **8 trips across the United States.***

COVID-19 Update: Prioritizing safety while returning to in-person service

Dear Villa
friends:



A crisis has a way of shedding light on an organization's core values, and I think St. Joseph's Villa is no exception. What I have seen highlighted over the past several months is how dedicated our team is to finding creative solutions, and to forging meaningful connections with students and families – no matter what obstacles may stand in the way.

Reuniting with students for in-person education and therapy this fall has energized and overjoyed our team. The gradual return of staff and clients to campus has been a success thus far because of our commitment to following a rigorous safety and mitigation plan, which I am proud to say has been commended by the Virginia Department of Health. Nothing is more important to us than the health and safety of every Villa employee and client, and we will continue to hold ourselves to the highest standard of safety and care.

I want to share my deep appreciation for our friends and community partners who have stepped up to support the work of the Villa in this time of great need. Together, we can emerge from this global health crisis looking toward a brighter future of stability, equity, and hope for all.

Sincerely,

Kathleen B. Barrett

Kathleen Burke Barrett
Chief Executive Officer

Brigette continues to thrive in uncharted times

St. Joseph's Villa provides In-Home Behavioral Treatment (IHBT) services for children with autism or other developmental delays to improve behavior and communication skills, and prepare them for futures of greater independence. For Brigette, who began receiving IHBT in the summer of 2018, it has meant new coping strategies, more engagement with her siblings, and forming a special bond with Villa clinician Claire McDonough.



Before the pandemic, weekly in-home sessions involved interactive games with Brigette's siblings, reading stories, and practicing self-care tasks like personal hygiene or cleaning up after an activity. The shift to telehealth had its challenges, but Claire remained determined to keep her connection with Brigette strong and make sure she was still able to work on her goals. When working on handwashing, for instance, Claire would bring her phone to the sink and prompt Brigette to do the same with her tablet.

They went through the steps together with verbal and visual cues.

Even though telehealth became easier over time, nothing could replace the experiences they shared in person. To her excitement, Claire recently restarted in-home sessions with Brigette with new safety measures in place. "I have seen really positive changes with Brigette," said Claire. "She seems much more confident and sure of herself. She loves to learn. I couldn't be more proud of her."



Claire walked with
Brigette's family in a
holiday parade for the
Special Olympics in 2019.

Homeless in high school, Antoine held on to hope with Flagler

As part of the Petersburg City and Schools Partnership, the Villa's Flagler Housing & Homeless Services is partnering with Communities in Schools (CIS) for the School Initiative Pilot Project, to help students experiencing homelessness stay focused on their education, and get ready for life after graduation. Antoine* enrolled in the program as a high school senior when faced with an unstable family and living situation. He had been sleeping in his car in the school parking lot. Despite all of his obstacles, with support from Flagler and CIS, Antoine was able to keep up his grades, work after school, and still make time for one of his biggest passions – playing baseball for his high school team. Flagler helped Antoine rebuild his family supports, and made sure he had a safe place to stay.




Flagler is helping Petersburg youth, families and seniors connect to community resources. We teamed with ALDI and the United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg to deliver meal kits to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Antoine dreams of one day playing baseball professionally. In the meantime, he has been accepted to community college where he continues excelling in classes and on the field with his college

baseball team. Today, he has a place to call home. With his ambition and positive attitude, we know Antoine will continue adding more chapters to his success story.

**Name changed for privacy*


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Alumni Spotlight Travis Carper

**CloudMSG CEO/Founder,
Dooley School alum ('84)**

Q: What do you remember about your Villa teachers?

A: Craig Hedley was our coach and Hattie was our teacher. They were amazing people. I remember how kind and patient they were. This was a very tough time in my life. I had a very chaotic and violent homelife. St. Joseph's Villa provided a safe place for me every day. Otherwise, I would have ended up at a detention home without any mentoring or attempts toward my development. I encountered a lot of psychiatrists and counselors in the system that for the most part failed me. Craig knew how to speak to me on my level. He got through. We still keep in touch to this day.

Q: What are you most proud of?

A: My ability to empathize. This took a lot of hard work and therapy. I am also proud of



my family. My family is my self-esteem in many ways. I also enjoy being in a position to be able to pay it forward and help others in my community. I have begun a program called Ten Fingers Ten Toes that aims to mentor kids, especially at-risk youth.

Q: What advice would you give Villa students today?

A: Above all else, show up. You can literally start a business with a smartphone. Make yourself valuable wherever you are and whoever you are with. When faced with adversity that feels insurmountable, show up and keep going. You will reap the rewards.

Inside:

STRENGTHENING OUR CONNECTIONS

Creativity and flexibility in virtual treatment help Brigette reach her goals

HOLDING ON TO HOPE

Star student-athlete Antoine finishes high school strong despite homelessness

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

How Dooley School shaped personal and professional trajectories for Travis Carper, CloudMSG CEO/Founder

We never stop believing in children and their families.

St. Joseph's Villa Board of Trustees

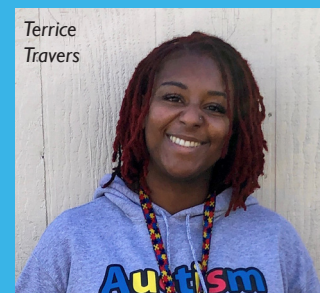
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Reimagining Autism Education: From Remote to Hybrid Learning

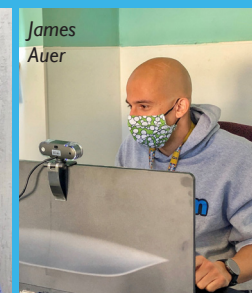
On March 13th, 2020, Governor Northam ordered the physical closing of every school in the Commonwealth due to COVID-19. The following Monday, our Sarah Dooley Center for Autism rebooted as a virtual private day school. All of our resources pivoted to providing the best online learning experience we could.

We knew that many of our students would not be able to simply sit in front of a computer and access instruction, so we immediately mailed home paper materials to complement our online activities. We launched Google Classrooms and built libraries of YouTube videos. Along with real-time video instruction from our teachers, our entire educational and clinical team held dozens of live webinars for parents. We learned as we went and continually refined our processes.

This fall, Sarah Dooley opened as a full-time 'hybrid' school, offering both in-person and virtual instruction, depending on families' preferences. Terrice Travers and her Instructional Assistant James Auer lead our Virtual Instruction Team, ensuring our online curriculum meets the needs of our unique population.



Terrice
Travers



James
Auer

I want to say how impressed I was with the content of the virtual school videos. It is apparent that much thought and effort has gone into everything. My thanks go to all of the people involved. Well done!

Michelle, parent